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Testimony Regarding S.B. 1135: An Act Establishing a Sustainable Path for Maintaining the Budget Reserve Fund and Reducing the Effect of Revenue Volatility on the State Budget
Asia Goubourn M.Ed.

Teen Outreach Program Director of Family Centered Services of CT.
Finance, Revenue, and Bonding Committee
April 23, 2015

Senator Fonfara, Representative Berger, and distinguished members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of S.B. 1135 which seeks to reduce the effect of revenue volatility on our state's budget.

My name is Asia Goubourn and I am the director of the Teen Outreach Program at Family Centered Services of CT. In collaboration with the Department of Social Services Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative, my particular program services 200 of the 800 students serviced state wide. We facilitate an evidence based curriculum in 4 public schools in the greater New Haven and Bridgeport areas.

Our teens formally meet 2-3 times with their facilitators from September – June during the school day for curriculum guided discussions about youth development, community involvement, service learning, and pregnancy prevention.

We currently are spending approximately \$2400 per student per school year. Our research shows that by the age of 30, the state will have paid approximately \$10,500 for services such as public assistance, criminal justice, and public health among children born to teen parents.

As you can see the preventative measure is far less expensive. In 2012 we were endorsed by the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee stating: "the relatively modest funding level for Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative represents the only state money dedicated to comprehensive primary prevention of unintended adolescent pregnancy".

Our program is needed!! The cuts are deep, unfair, and I believe a little short sided. In order to avoid the harmful effect of these cuts, we ask the committee to raise revenue. We support the revenue ideas of groups like Connecticut Voices for Children, including a more progressive income tax, the elimination of certain tax breaks, and raising the cigarette tax, among others.

We need to make better choices. Every cut we make is a choice, and we must make better choices.

Thank you very much for your time.

Asia Goubourn M.Ed.